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Bill Casey at t

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Quietly in Co

By David Wise
Photo by Ken Spencer

Some weeks ago, an interesting piece of information began circulating in the intelligence community — the closed, spooky world of the Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation and the other spy agencies in and around Washington.

The word went out that William J. Casey, the director of central intelligence, had bought an expensive house in the exclusive Foxhall Road section of Washington.

To men and women accustomed to working with fragments, piecing together minute bits of intelligence to form a larger mosaic, the report was immediately seen for its true significance. Better than any official announcement, it meant that Bill Casey, a Long Islander who has a home in Roslyn Harbor, was planning to stick around as CIA director.

There have been times in the past stormy year and a half when it was not at all clear that Casey would survive as the DCI, as the spies refer to their chief. There was a series of disasters. First, Casey named his former political aide, Max C. Hugel, as head of the CIA's cloak-and-dagger directorate. Hugel was soon forced to resign as the result of disclosures in the Washington Post about his questionable business dealings. Then the Senate Intelligence Committee, responding to a barrage of publicity, began probing Casey's own financial past. And Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), chairman of the intelligence committee, publicly suggested point-blank for Casey to resign.

All of that took place last year, Casey's first year on the job. The storm subsided. The Senate panel, in a backhanded way, found Casey not "unfit" to serve. And through it all, the CIA director — Ronald Reagan's campaign manager in 1980 — managed to preserve his close personal relationship with the President. ("I still call him Ronnie," Casey has said.)

Among those who must surely have heard the report about the house off Foxhall Road was Casey's deputy, Adm. Bobby Ray Inman, who Sen. Goldwater and a lot of other members of Congress had openly hoped would be Reagan's original choice for CIA director. Blocked from the top job, wooed by private industry with job offers in six figures, Inman in April announced that he was quitting.

In Moscow, the KGB has no doubt already heard about Casey's new house. Very likely, Vitali V. Fedorchuk, the recently appointed chairman of the Committee for State Security, better known as the KGB, has already informed President Leonid Brezhnev in the Kremlin.

And the report is true. J. William Doswell, director of the CIA's Office of External Affairs, a smooth, Richmond, Va., lobbyist and former newsman whom Casey brought in as his top public relations man, confirms it. Doswell said that Casey and his wife, Sophia, moved last month from their apartment somewhere in Washington to their new home off Foxhall Road.

career who has managed to stay one jump ahead of trouble, barely avoiding entanglement with the likes of Robert Vesco during Watergate. For example, Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware, a Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee and Casey's most vocal critic, refused to endorse the panel's findings on the CIA director, declaring: "Mr. Casey has displayed a consistent pattern of omissions, misstatements, and contradictions." And Casey's critics also charge he is not really qualified to run the CIA, since his intelligence experience dates from World War II, when he worked for the Office of

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